

(Washington, D.C.) - Today, the U.S. House of Representatives brought to the floor House Resolution 895, a resolution honoring Fort Hood soldiers and their families in the wake of Thursday's tragic shooting. Congressman Chet Edwards managed the House floor proceedings at the request of Congressman John Carter, who is the lead sponsor of the resolution and traveled to Ft. Hood today. Edwards, who is the lead cosponsor of the resolution, represented Fort Hood through three combat deployments from 1991 to 2004.

*"In the days ahead, Ft. Hood will become known to the world as a place of unspeakable tragedy, but I know it as a place of great triumph-a place where service to country isn't just an ideal, it is a way of life, a place where the American spirit is alive and well, even amidst this tragedy. I hope the world will see the Ft. Hood I saw as its representative in Congress for 14 years,"* said Edwards.

Edwards is the Chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee and co-chairs the House Army Caucus. The following are his remarks as prepared for delivery on the floor of the House today:

On behalf of citizens all across America, we rise today to express our deepest respect and

heartfelt sorrow to the soldiers and families of Ft. Hood, Texas.

These great Americans who have sacrificed so much in service to our country now face a tragedy that just one day ago would have seemed unimaginable. In the hours, days and months ahead, I hope the Ft. Hood family knows that the thoughts and prayers of the American family are with them.

It is a tragedy beyond words that young Americans who were willing to risk their lives for our country in combat abroad ended up losing their lives here at home.

While these soldiers did not die in combat, they gave their lives in service to country, and, for that, we will always consider them heroes.

The spouses, children and families of the fallen may not have worn our nation's uniform, but they have served our nation through their deep personal sacrifice. Let us be clear here today. We will never ever forget that sacrifice.

We cannot bring back their loved ones, but I hope they will forever feel the collective love, gratitude and prayers of millions of their fellow Americans.

To the wounded and their loved ones, our nation's fervent hopes and prayers are with you in these difficult moments. Please know you are not alone.

Mr. Speaker, in the days ahead, Ft. Hood will become known to the world as a place of unspeakable tragedy, but I know it as a place of great triumph-a place where service to country isn't just an ideal, it is a way of life, a place where the American spirit is alive and well, even amidst this tragedy.

I hope the world will see the Ft. Hood I saw as its representative in Congress for 14 years.

When I think of Ft. Hood, I think of the 29-year-old Army widow who asked me, not to help her, but rather how she could help others who had lost their loved ones in combat.

When I think of Ft. Hood, I think of the young soldier I met at a welcome home ceremony. It was three days before my wife gave birth to our first child, and when I saw him with his wife and newborn baby, I told him how excited I was at the thought of becoming a father for the first time. Without complaint, he looked at me and said, "Sir, I missed the birth of my first child because I was in Iraq, and I missed the birth of my second child when I was deployed to Bosnia."

When I think of Ft. Hood, I think of the parents I met there this summer who lost their two sons in combat in Iraq just 9 days apart. How can a nation measure the depth of that kind of sacrifice?

When I think of Ft. Hood, I think of soldiers, families and their neighbors in nearby communities who care for each other and are proud to serve and, yes, sacrifice for our nation's freedom.

Ft. Hood is known as "The Great Place", because that is what it is, past, present and future. The actions of one deranged gunman should not and will not change that fact.

With the support and prayers of the American family, Ft. Hood will recover from this terrible tragedy.

The servicemen and women of Ft. Hood, their families, and the neighboring communities are a very special and unique family.

They make Ft. Hood what it is -- a shining star in our nation's defense, a star that will burn brightly for many years to come.

From this tragedy, just days before Veterans Day, I pray that Americans will be reminded how blessed we are to live in a land where a special few, our servicemen and women and their families, are willing to give up so much in service to country. Let us all rededicate ourselves to honoring our troops, our veterans and their families. Let us remember them not just on Veterans Day and Memorial Day and on a tragic day, but every day.

As we ask God's blessings on those whose lives we honor, let us remember that we are the land of the free, because we are still the home of the brave.

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